



FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENTS

By Kim Slote, policy analyst

CASH MANAGEMENT

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Oct. 3, 2016: Cash Management Electronic Announcement #4 – Availability of the Cash Management Information Page on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals website. Information and resources relating to the cash management regulations published Oct. 30, 2015 can be easily accessed on the new [Cash Management Information](#) page on IFAP. Links are provided on the page to relevant Dear Colleague Letters, Electronic Announcements, webinars and other resources. Questions not answered by the materials provided can be submitted through the cash management mailbox at CashManagementQuestions@ed.gov.

TECHNICAL

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Oct. 3, 2016: Availability of EDEExpress for Windows 2017-2018, Release 1.0. This release contains global, application processing and packaging functionality for the 2017-2018 cycle. You can access EDEExpress for Windows 2017-2018 on the Federal Student Aid Download website located at <https://www.fsadownload.ed.gov>. Other EDEExpress 2017-2018 documents offered on the website include:

- Installation Guide for EDEExpress for Windows 2017-2018
- EDEExpress for Windows 2017-2018, Release 1.0 Cover Letter
- EDEExpress for Windows 2017-2018, Release 1.0 Desk Reference
- 2017-2018 Packaging Technical Reference

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Oct. 27, 2016: MPN, MPN Manifest and Disclosure Statement Print Functionality in EDEExpress Discontinued with Implementation of New Forms. Print capability will not be updated for EDEExpress 2016-2017, Release 2.0 or the EDEExpress 2017-2018, Release 2.0 software scheduled to be posted in April 2017. For EDEExpress 2018-2019, print functionality will be removed completely. Students should be directed to StudentLoans.gov, where a fillable PDF version is available of the revised MPNs. Additional information and guidance is available in the announcement on how to obtain paper copies or print paper versions using third-party software.

On Oct. 28, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Availability of Service Release Update for EDEExpress for Windows 2016-2017, Release 2.0. Enhancements to the Direct Loan module



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for the 2016-2017 award cycle were implemented by this service release, which adds the Default Overpay Code value of E (Not Returned from NSLDS) to PLUS applications Acknowledgement (CRSP170P) files. Additional instructions and guidance are provided in the announcement regarding installation. You will only need to install this service release if you process Direct Loan records using EDEExpress 2016-2017.

INTEREST RATES

A [Federal Register Notice](#) was issued by the USDE Oct. 3, 2016: Annual Notice of Variable Interest Rates for Federal Family Education Loan Program Loans made prior to July 1, 2010. The interest rates provided are Federal Stafford, Federal PLUS, Federal SLS and Federal Consolidation Interest Rate Calculations for the Period July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017. The attached [PDF](#) version of the charts contains the loan types, disbursement periods and current variable interest rates.

Another [Federal Register Notice](#) was issued by the USDE Oct. 3, 2016: Annual Notice of Interest Rates for Direct Loan Program Loans Made Prior to July 1, 2013. The interest rate calculations provided are for fixed-rate Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans and Direct PLUS Loans

first disbursed on or after July 1, 2016 but before July 1, 2017.

IRS DATA RETRIEVAL TOOL

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Oct. 4, 2016: Reminder to Institutions to Promote the Use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool for Both 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 FAFSA Years. Institutions are encouraged to promote use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to their students and families for both FAFSA years. This will help prevent conflicting information from occurring.

VERIFICATION

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Oct. 6, 2016: Program Integrity Questions and Answers Website Update. New and revised questions and answers have been posted to the verification portion of this Program Integrity Question and Answer website. The Program Integrity Information website can be viewed at the following link:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hea/rulemaking/2009/integrity-qa.html>.

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Oct. 18, 2016: Acceptable Documentation Update for 2016-2017 Award Year Verification. This



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announcement provides updated guidance regarding alternative documentation that can be accepted for income and other tax related verification information. For the remainder of the 2016-2017 award year verification, the following information must be submitted as alternative documentation, for tax filers who were unsuccessful in obtaining an IRS Tax Return Transcript.

- A signed copy of the relevant 2015 IRS tax return that was filed with the IRS.
- A statement from the tax filer, on or attached to the tax return, which certifies that the tax return submitted to the institution includes the same information that was submitted to the IRS.
- Documentation from the IRS that the tax transcript request was unsuccessful.
- A completed and signed IRS Form 4506T-EZ or Form 4506-T that includes on line 5 the name, address, and telephone number of the institution as the third party to whom the IRS is to mail the 2015 IRS transcript.

Additional requirements are outlined in the announcement.

On Oct. 31, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Changes in Verification Tracking Groups. Based on corrections made to an applicant's CPS record or other information available to the USDE, some applicants may be transferred from Verification Tracking Group V1, V4 or V6 to Verification Tracking Group V5. Additional information is outlined in the announcement and in the attached chart.

FAFSA

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Oct. 13, 2016: Our FAFSA outreach campaign counters the myths of financial aid. Federal Student Aid is focused on dispelling common myths about the FAFSA and financial aid in their outreach program this year. This announcement provides links to the [FAFSA Campaign website](#), the [Digital Resources Page](#) and a blog post titled, "[12 Common FAFSA Mistakes](#)". A PDF of [Federal Student Aid Resources](#) is also attached to the announcement.

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Oct. 27, 2016: 2017-2018 FAFSA Email Campaign Launch. Due to the recent FAFSA changes, the USDE has decided to conduct two separate FAFSA email campaigns for students who have not yet filed a 2017-2018 FAFSA. The initial



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email campaign will occur October – December 2016 to encourage eligible students to file their FAFSA. The email text is attached to this announcement. In January 2017, an email reminder will be sent to students who are renewal eligible that have not yet submitted their FAFSA.

CONFLICTING INFORMATION

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Oct. 21, 2016: Information Regarding Institutional Responsibilities to Resolve 2017-2018 Comment Code 399 Conflicting Information Issues. Comment Code 399 is assigned to a student or parent who reported different 2015 income and tax information on their 2017-2018 FAFSA compared to what was reported on their 2016-2017 FAFSA. This announcement explains institutional responsibility in resolving conflicting information issues for various scenarios. Additional guidance was previously provided on identifying and resolving possible conflicting information in Dear Colleague Letter [GEN-16-14](#) published on Aug. 3, 2016.

REFERENCE GUIDES

On Oct. 14, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Federal Student Aid Handbook Appendices [2016-2017 Federal Student Aid Handbook]. The

updated appendices are now available on the [Information for Financial Aid Professionals](#) website. Click [here](#) to access the 2016-2017 FSA Handbook Appendices. The complete 2016-2017 FSA Handbook can be accessed [here](#).

150 PERCENT DIRECT SUBSIDIZED LOAN LIMIT

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Oct. 18, 2016: 150% Direct Subsidized Loan Limit: Electronic Announcement #23 – COD System Changes for 150 percent Direct Subsidized Loan Limit to be Implemented on Oct. 28-30, 2016. Changes to the Common Origination and Disbursement System functionality that were implemented in Oct. are outlined in an [attachment](#) to this announcement. These changes support the processing of Federal Pell Grants, Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants, Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants and Direct Loan Awards for the 2016-2017 award year.

STUDENT AID INTERNET GATEWAY

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Oct. 24, 2016: Active Confirmation of TG Numbers (SAIG Mailboxes) and Electronic Services User Accounts Required by Dec. 9, 2016, to



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Maintain Access to Federal Student Aid Systems. Every organization enrolled for a SAIG account is required to review and validate their assigned TG numbers by Dec. 9, 2016. This is done to ensure the ongoing security of Federal Student Aid's data systems. Enrolled staff members that still require SAIG access must be confirmed and users that no longer need accounts must be deleted by the Primary Destination Point Administrator for each organization. Instructions on how to validate or delete SAIG accounts is included in the announcement.

TOTAL AND PERMANENT DISABILITY DISCHARGE

On Oct. 31, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): TPD Discharge Information – Perkins Assignment Procedures due to Total and Permanent Disability Discharge. The procedures for institutions to follow when submitting TPD discharge assignments to Nelnet TPD Servicer have been updated. Updated procedures can be found on the [Campus-Based Processing Information Page](#) on the IFAP website. The announcement includes some important reminders regarding TPD discharge assignments. All previous operational guidance for Perkins TPD assignment processing is replaced by the updated procedures.

FEDERAL STUDENT AID WEB ADDRESSES

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Oct. 31, 2016: Upcoming Change to Federal Student Aid Web Addresses. Per a mandate by the Office of Management and Budget ([OMB Memorandum M-15-13](#)), all publicly-accessible federal websites and web services must provide service through a secure internet connection. Two primary changes that will affect external users include changing any URLs that begin with the “http” prefix to an “https” prefix and removing “www” from all FSA URLs. All changes will be completed by Dec. 31, 2017. This announcement gives more detail on the following topics:

- Implementation Schedule
- Browser Information
- Notifying Students, Parents and Borrowers
- Contact Information